
THE

FAMILY PARTY.

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THE
FAMILY PARTY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

It is not the privilege of vulgar minds, to mark the line
between the friend and lover, and never step beyond.

LAVATER.

LONDON:

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FOR

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THE

FAMILY PARTY



VOL. II

This is the history of the family, to mark the line
between the living and the dead, and never the same.
LAVATER

LONDON

PRINTED BY THE

STATIONER

AND

WILLIAM LAMBERT, 11, ST. MARK'S STREET.

MDCCLXXXII

FAMILY PARTY.

CHAP. I.

MR. JERVAIS'S INTRODUCTION TO

MISS LAWRENCE.

MR. Lawrence was with much difficulty kept from the knowledge of his daughter's situation, and Mrs. St. John little less deranged in

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her intellects than her niece, counting time by the long minutes until Mrs. Dickson's return — at length, however, she did return, and told that lady she had brought Mr. Jervais, with the utmost privacy, into the house, where he was waiting on a private spot also, for her farther commands.

Dickson, cried Mrs. St. John, this gentleman we well know, is a youth of genius, if not of enterprize—conjure him, therefore, my good, my never failing friend, conjure him, to submit, to pass himself upon any part of the family that may chance to see him, for a relation of yours—a relation I always wished to be kind to, and to whom I have already been so
from

from his infancy for no other report of him will, I am certain, secure him from discovery; Mrs. Dickson instantly did as she was desired, and Mr. Jervais, more dead than alive, attended her on her way to Miss Lawrence's chamber, who now was much too ill to be sensible of his melancholy visit—whose amiable breast was disturbed, and whose gentle spirit was agitated, by the idea of being under obligations to him, that would have deemed himself obliged to Heaven for making him the agent of providence for her safety. But just as they were upon the point of entering it, Mrs. St. John, whose dressing-room was upon the same floor, by waving

her hand, gave them to know, she had some-what to say to them.

Mr. Jervais implicitly followed his conductress, and followed her in silence, a silence more eloquent than all the languages upon earth, for testifying grief unutterable, and was received by Mrs. St. John with tears, (at that moment from the hazardous predicament into which she had brought her best interests) of unfeigned contrition and alarm.

I have destroyed my niece, cried she, have destroyed my brother, and am wholly unworthy to behold the light of the sun, of which my misconduct will surely deprive them for ever. Mr. Jervais bowed upon the hand she graciously

graciously held out to him, and would have spoke comfort, but his words died away upon his lips, and Mrs. Dickson having stepped to look at her sweet patient (as she called her) presently returned in all haste, saying, Miss Lawrence asked for him, and he was immediately led in by Mrs. St. John.

The poor child's complexion (as Mrs. St. John observed) was heightened to a great degree, and her eyes sparkled with alarming vivacity—the gentleman, my dear, whispered her aunt, is come according to your request, and therefore recollect what you most wish to say to him.—

She clapped her hands together, and cried, I shall now die in peace, for I now live to thank him; this, this opportunity was all I asked for, O! sir, the horrors of the moment when your kind voice first reached my ear, will never be forgot by me. He knelt down in order the better to conceal his distress—I have nothing in my power, resumed she, to offer you—but my father has much goodness, bear witness then all present, I leave it in charge for my father to recompence him. But stay, sir, something shall be done by me, this pocket book—nay, receive it (Mr. Jervais obeyed her) and always keep it as a testimony, though a poor one, of my gratitude.

My

My dear young lady, said Jervais, with a face as pale as ashes, there is but one—one only way of proving your gratitude to me. Let me hear it, cried she eagerly, I will do much to prove it; it is, replied he to compose your spirits, to try to take some rest to live for the happiness of your friends—and never more remember this circumstance—but as—but as, repeated he hesitatingly. (Mrs. St. John begged he would go on, for that she perceived her niece's suspense was painful to her,) as the means resumed he, with a scarcely articulate voice, of giving me the happiness of preserving you. Lydia, my kind Lydia, said she, turning from Mr. Jervais, smooth my pillow—I feel relieved—I recol-

lest I have a father, an aunt, and friends that would be sorry to lose me—yet no one but myself knows the outrage I sustained from that Ruffian; farewell, sir, added she, waving her hand, without looking at him—when I can prove myself grateful, I will beg of my aunt to let me see you again. This was his dismissal, and was observed as such, and as Mrs. St. John paid Mr. Jervais the compliment to attend him to the door of the chamber, he whispered a request that she would honor him with one five minutes audience in her dressing-room. This was sufficient to set such a timid mind as her's to work, and threw her accordingly (as she described it to her Dickson) into inconceivable tremors—

tremors

tremors the good lady might have spared herself, for behold, he had alone solicited this audience to inform her that it appeared to him, Miss Lawrence's delicacy had met with some unrevealed mortification, and advised the acknowledgment of it should be drawn from her, as such relief would facilitate her recovery.

This advice Mrs. St. John did not think proper to dispise, and Lydia was bid to try all her winning graces, to unlock her cousin's heart on the occasion—when it appeared that many things had been deemed tremendous by her innocent, and inexperienced youth, that fine ladies of fashion and ton, not only laugh at, but consider,

as proofs of their charms—in three words, the domino had pressed her cheek, her lips, her neck with his prophane lips, whilst he held her in his arms—and she was covered with confusion to relate, even to her female cousin, the acts of gallantry the gay world judge with charity, and at worst, gently rebuke.

From this hour she began to amend, the sympathizing Lydia watched her whilst she slept, and rejoiced her mother beyond all imagination by telling her with what calmness she awoke. But however rational she had been in what she said to Mr. Jervais, she remembered the interview as a pleasing dream only, (during her refreshing

ing

ing sleep) and she told it for such to Lydia—a dream she should be glad to realize, she said, at some future period.

Mrs. St. John now opened upon her knowledge the concern it was to her peace that her brother should never be made acquainted with the true cause of her illness; happily, providentially, nay, almost miraculously, continued she, four days have passed without his seeing you; his Jamaica affairs drawing him from home, at the hours it was usual for you to be visible, and his evening and morning enquiries after your health being answered by my directions, intirely to his wish (under my superintendence) he thought no more of you. But to-morrow, my

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love,

love, added she, I hope you will be able to make me happy by coming down stairs, and Lydia, (as well as yourself, having on a large night cap) I trust, we shall prevent his discovering you have been ill: as for the gentleman that has occupied your dreams, you are sensible, my dear Jessy, without letting your father know the whole of our mortifying adventures, you can never hope to see him under this roof.

The conclusion of Mrs. St. John's speech roused Miss Jessy's affection, so ill did it accord with her sense of Mr. Jervais's claims—not see her deliverer—she was, however, too much accustomed to rely upon her aunt's superior

perior judgment, to oppose it in this instance, and was far too tender of her peace to refuse complying with any request, that could save it from being wounded—it was therefore proposed by her aunt, in return for the concessions she made her, (and to gratify a secret inclination of her own) that he should meet them, by invitation, at their villa on Enfield chase, the first visit she could contrive to pay there without her brother's accompanying them—with which resolution Dickson was commissioned to make him acquainted, but above all the rest, to caution him to be upon his guard, not to let Miss Lawrence discover he was really introduced to her during her illness.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

A VISIT TO THIS VILLA.

MISS Lawrence, though now turned seventeen, being bred in the city, and under the care of her most exemplary aunt, was so little acquainted with the ettequettes of life, as to think she could not only with propriety, but in duty bound, profess all the gratitude, and all the affection, and all the good wishes, with which her amiable heart was filled,
for

for the gentleman that rescued her from the ruffian's hands.

Mr. Jervais's person, so great was her consternation, horror and alarm, was, however, scarcely remembered, but his voice was for ever sounding in her ear—and she was happy to think she could, by any sense, discriminate him from the rest of the human race, for she would often say she asked not to live beyond the period she was able to thank him for what he had done in her defence, solemnly declaring that whenever the melancholy time arrived, that by the death of her dearest father rendered her mistress of her own actions—she would divide her fortune with him to its last guinea.

Mr.

Mr. Lawrence was happy to see his best beloved children, Jessy and Lydia, and if in his heart with such equal tenderness to all, partiality could be supposed to dwell, and tapping Lydia on her cheek, by a fly congratulatory glance of his eye at his Dennis, proved to his argus-eyed sister, that he had not given up the idea of a penchant subsisting between them.

Come my Jessy, said he, or you Lydia, for it is indifferent to me which, do exert yourself a little, and tell me how you was entertained in the Haymarket, for no one else has yet done me that favour, why dear sir, replied Mrs. St. John, (fearful the young ones might make a blunder)

the

the truth is, that a masquerade, like the free masons secret, cannot be revealed—from its consisting in forms, and ceremonies, and characters, and turn of humour, which, though well understood, and perfectly enjoyed by those that frequent them, and of course are in the secret—but cannot be told justly to any uninitiated ear. Very agreeable, truly, said Mr. Lawrence, so then I have spent near twenty pounds, every thing included, upon my FAMILY PARTY, without the chance of a single return. That is so mercantile, brother, cried Mrs. St. John, that I can hear no more returns ; when, I beseech you, did you form an expectation of me when you determined to confer the favours you have done upon me.

O,

O, if you are serious, said the merchant, I have done, however I will ask no more questions in public—the library Jeffy, the library Lydia—there is the place where our souls have elbow room—and our lips speak the dictates of our hearts.

Mrs. St. John's vanity was shot through and through by this little fally—and for the first time in her life, she beheld her gentle tempered daughter, Lydia, in the character of a rival. I like not the insinuation, said she, (on reporting to Dickson what her brother had said) for who knows the freedom of speech the young ladies may indulge themselves in, when in this state of temporary emancipation,
from

from every social tie—the strongest of all other ties in existence.

Now as the writer of this history is not clear as to Mrs. St. John's meaning—whether by the social ties she figured to herself and others, the restraints of a large party, or the regulating turn of her countenance, he would be obliged to any of his readers—that can assist his dullness, and enable him to comprehend it—be it, however, as it may, from that hour, for many succeeding months, either Mrs. Dickson or the great lady, her friend, disdained not to plant themselves within ear-shot of all that passed in these library assemblings—until thoroughly convinced that nothing could be more insipid,

insipid, literally, or *ennui*, than their conversation, they were left to follow their own inventions, or the fool and madman's condition of pardon—namely that it was not worth any one's while to notice what they said.

Jeffy being quite recovered, Mrs. St. John contrived (for the sweet child was nothing in her hands) to render her own desire to visit the villa, and give Jervais the meeting there, the actual request of her niece. I go Dickson, said she, purely to oblige my niece, not that I pretend to be so abstracted as to take no interest in a young man's happiness, that has most inconsiderately made me the arbitress of his destiny.

What

What a singular fate pursues me,
too old or too young is the eternal
marks my swains are doomed to wear,
confanguinity pops up its unsightly
head between me and splendid wed-
lock's bands.

Mr. Lawrence was asked, because
known to be engaged, to favour them
with his company to the villa—but
his reply was, that he would enjoy the
pleasure, as usual, from their recital,
but that business would not permit
either his sons or himself to accom-
pany them.

This news was deemed by Mrs. St.
John a lucky hit, for when the boys,
as well as girls were at the chace, she
was

was rather disturbed to see them walking in parties under the trees—pairs, wholly repugnant to her inclination—and she moreover well knew she had the power to disperse the female part of her relations at will.

Mr. Jervais was so true to the letter of his appointment, that he had passed a couple of hours *tête à tête* with Mrs. Dickson, who was sent down in the morning to be ready to receive him—before the ladies arrived. Miss Lawrence's heart warmed with gratitude, as she nearer and nearer approached her deliverer—but what was her surprise—chagrine I might have said, when she was presented by her aunt to a fine handsome young fellow, in
the

the three and twentieth year of his age—and the very gentleman that had made the fine speech at the debating club (she recollected) which pictured her aunt's kindness to her father in the most attaching, glowing, and beautiful colourings.

Mr. Jervais was not without his emotions—but had just sufficient fortitude to save himself from the ridicule, an orator must have incurred, whose mind could be thrown off its center, by trifling incidents. Nevertheless his discomposure was so visible to Miss Lawrence that she felt herself affected by it—and could only say, I, sir, owe my life to your generosity—and my gratitude is already too
5 much

much for my heart—do not therefore attempt to augment it, by shewing me, you are thus kindly concerned for my health——and Mr. Jervais marked this down to be the whitest hour of his whole life.

Lydia sighed, and Olivia sneered at the scene between so sentimental a damsel as her cousin Jeffy, she said, and so fine feeling a youth as her deliverer, and hoped her mamma, would try her genius, to turn it into a dramatic one—what he might be capable of becoming when an intercourse with the world (or at least the polished inhabitants thereof, had wore off the rust of the college she would not take upon her to say—but that at present

his

his manners were precise and his ideas primitive—and to fill up the preface of her good opinion of him, she declared the sight of him put her into the vapours.

Miss Lawrence, from comparing his looks of despair with the countenance of gladness he brought down with him to the chase—disavowed his being the person she had seen in her dream—the day was however far from a pleasant one—Mrs. St. John never suffering Jervais to stir a step without her.

Moreover Miss Lawrence, to whose ingenious and open mind, every form, (not absolutely connected with the rule

of right, and fitness of things,) was a painful fetter, had the mortification to discover, from some words her cousin Olivia dropped, that if her deliverer had been ninety or any other far advanced age, she might have kissed his hand, and given him every demonstration of gratitude, even to calling him her second father, she must not, because he happened to be young, profess even a sisterly regard for him, unless it was her wish to lead him to conclude, she was over head and ears in love with him, his youth was therefore considered by her as a real misfortune, depriving her of the freedom of natural conduct.

I will, said she, however, make him amends in my heart—where my cousin Olivia, with all her wit and vivacity, cannot penetrate, with love there, to all intents and purposes, as a brother—and despise all she says of cupid and his arrows only to shew her reading—for esteem and gratitude are surely love—nay, tenderness of temper is love also, though not of the expansive kind, that directs or limits our choice to one particular object, even to the absorbing of every other liking—but in my heart, I am persuaded, this highest species of preference, would produce no such effect, for it will always be open to, and sufficiently large to contain the love of all my friends.—Such was Miss Lawrence's Logic on

the subject of a passion, respecting the characteristical operations of which, such various opinions have at various periods been uttered and delivered; luckily Mrs. St. John, who had passed the rubicon, was too much taken up by self-complacences to observe their first rencounter, at the villa—whilst Mrs. Dickson, with all her simplicity and *naviété*, less self-engaged, from the help of common sense alone, saw enough to give her the idea, Miss Jessy stood a good chance of robbing Mrs. St. John of her admirer—and thought it but fair the young lady should have a lover as well as her cousin, and where could she hope to find a more compleater gentleman, or more suitable to her own age, in his

majesty's dominions, and so settled in her own mind, to contrive (at a vast distance) when convenient, to feel that lady's pulse on the occasion. The evening brought them back to London—Mrs. St. John all gaiety, the rest of the company somewhat serious—for so heartily had she confined and teased them, that even Jervais himself was glad when set down, to wish her a good night.

I often wonder, madam, said Dickson, when they were alone, why you do not wind up all your maternal goodness to Miss Lawrence, by getting her a proper sweetheart, for no doubt she will soon be upon the look out for herself, and may make a very wrong step of it,

unguided and unprotected by your wisdom and understanding. I protest, Dickson, you alarm me, returned the lady—that is, would alarm me if my niece, at somewhat more than seventeen years old, was not as little a shy simpleton as she always was, you know, ten years ago. But who can ensure you, how much longer she will continue so, said Mrs. Dickson, for remember, madam, the Cymon you read about to me the other day, he was changed, as if by art magic, in an instant, when the right lady was cast in his way.

Poets, replied Mrs. St. John, paint men and things just as best pleases their own fancy—not that I would be so

so prophane as to impeach the power of the blind deity, though I would not chuse to be such an enemy to my own happiness, as to ride out to meet grievances, for Dickson, to confess the truth to you, I am well aware it is no light consideration, who shall possess my brother's immense wealth. I think, indeed, that without either presumption or witchcraft, my daughters will come in for their share of it, nevertheless, but do not think me covetous, I frequently lament I have not a son to fill up the matrimonial groupe, without taking in even the most accomplished stranger, for strangers may be applied to without their interests being blended with the interests of the family, into which they are received, and who can

say what my brother, in a fit of paternal dotage might be capable of doing, to enrich and aggrandise his darling child.

Pray, madam, let me ask you, said Dickson, whether it appears to you, young Mr. Jervais's head is most full of learning or his heart of sensibility. Answer me first, said Mrs. St. John, and tell me what frolic of your brain has prompted you to put so wild a question to me. Nay, madam, I was only thinking, that as Mr. Jervais cannot be made other than he is, how good it would be of you, in return for all favours, in order to save him from dying for you, to bid him live for Miss Jessy, for no one can deny he has a
fine

fine person, a sweet silver tongue—
and—Mrs. St. John was petrified—
and unable to pronounce even the
monosyllable, *bold*—for a full second—
but hold, hold, at length, cried she,
for you are now not only got upon
dangerous, but upon offensive ground.
Mrs. Dickson drew herself in, but not
without a secret comment upon, and
much secret dislike of this unexpected,
and in her idea, needless severity of
rebuke.

You mention that you call this
gentleman silver tongue, by the exer-
cise of which I find he has won your
heart through your ear—but you
should remember, as Pope tells us,
numbers

C 5

“ Who

“ Who reason wisely are not therefore wise,
and he gives you to know the cause at
the same time—for, continues he,

“ Their pride in reasoning, not in acting lies :
in other words that their conduct is so
opposite to all the fine sentiments and
lessons, their conversation or their
public speeches set forth, that they
who would not be deceived by them
must not trust to their specious ap-
pearance. Notwithstanding all which,
madam, said Dickson, had Mr. Jer-
vais’s age been a little, only a very
little more agreeable to your own
—I think he would not have found
you cruel on a proper application.

There, Dickson, I grant you, you
are right, for, had a dozen, or even
ten

ten more years, ripened his judgment, enlarged his understanding and improved his eloquence, I do not suppose there would have been a more irresistible lover in the world—nor will I dissemble to you, for in the words of Desdamona to the great general Othello I have often wished Heaven had been pleased to make me such a man—nay, farther, after this lady's example, might add my request, that if he could present me some friend he was ambitious should woo me successfully, to teach him the lessons he himself is master of—to steal away the heart—that is, Dickson, if I was a woman who could think of marrying a second time; and yet, Dickson, all this mighty disparity of age between

us, however great it might appear to the public eye, is in reality only—let me see—three and twenty—four and forty—you stare, and well you may—but come, I will get more within the line, and say nine and thirty—for nine and thirty, I believe, I am compleat (excellent arithmetician—for her daughter, Olivia, was at the time of her making this honest calculation, turned of twenty) not that a woman of forty, Dickson, has much to complain of, for though the cheek may not have altogether so delicate a bloom as the misses of fifteen—the eyes retain their original brilliancy—the mouth (provided it ever had such) its wonted attractions, and except in cases of very unusual *en bon point*, the whole figure

figure its graces and elegance—had this admired orator, therefore, been thirty three, or thirty two, the magnitude of his knowledge, and the sagacity of his aspect, might have sanctified my acceptance of his devoirs—but a youth, a stripling, there is no enduring the idea —— Notwithstanding his youth, you see, could not secure him from loving me with all my weight of years, Dickson, on my head—we will, therefore, my dear good woman, by way of frolic only, by sending a proper question to the DEBATING CLUB, without once informing him whence it originates, contrive to give ourselves the pleasure of hearing all he can say upon the tender passion.

Mrs.

Mrs. Dickson professed herself ready to adopt whatever mode of conveyance the lady might point out to her—and wishing her a good morning, retired to make her own reflections on what had passed between them.

I could not have believed, said she to herself, that Mrs. St. John was capable of such narrow conduct—the precise conduct of the dog in the manger—for she knows full well, at her age it is impossible for her to marry Mr. Jervais, and yet cannot bring herself to approve him as a husband for her niece; should it, however, hereafter appear that the young people form an attachment to each other, they

they shall not want a friend on any good or worthy occasion to oblige or serve them.

CHAP. III.

A NEW DEBATE.

MRS. St. John having fabricated a question, "Whether the most ardent, or the most gentle, was the most sincere and valuable lover." Mrs. Dickson put the letter into the penny post with her own hands, with the general

neral address, "To the gentlemen debating."

Mr. Jervais was not, however, to be deceived—he knew the author by manifold tokens—and eager to distinguish himself upon so nice and delicate a subject, collected and arranged all his best arguments, and was, by the time the debate was advertised, prepared, to his own satisfaction, to become a speaker. Mrs. St. John and her family came early as usual, and Mrs. Dickson fought with all the eyes she had for her favourite gentleman, but fought in vain, to come and talk to Miss Jeffy. Her favourite gentleman did not make his appearance the whole evening, and the debate was at length

length began by a person they had never seen before.

It is a moral adage, said this person, that goodness to goodness is a natural attraction—and why not allow the same magnetic propensity to elegance and refinement. That assemblage of human excellence, called beauty, is difficult to define—for the most perfect set of features are not sufficient to constitute it—the mind alone gives the features their resistless touches, the charms that lead the soul captive, and render nature art, in manifold instances—and where he asked was the iron breast that could stand forth, and prove itself invulnerable. Well has Rochfoucault asserted, that tho' there is but
one

one sort of love there are many copies, for as to what is called an ardent or a gentle passion derives those distinctions solely from the complexion or mental constitution of the lover; the animated temper, the lively and the desponding, will bear their peculiar marks about them — but that these must particularize the man, not the passion, is demonstrable—and it will therefore illustrate our subject to inquire, what are the genuine proofs of genuine affection—so much has, however, already been said and written on the direct and affirmative merits thereof, that I shall beg leave to exemplify them by negatives.—

And

And first the seducer assumes the name of lover—but how it is possible for any one to mistake so dire a character as the destroyer of youth, of innocence, and of virtue, for him whose heart is touched, and whose mind is influenced by the gentlest and kindest of human impulses is a most astonishing circumstance—Stand forth ye libertines, whosoever ye be, and recount to us, in the fulness of your exultation, your deeds of prowess, over whom do ye triumph—the unsuspecting, the amiable, the confiding, and the defenceless—over these, and over these alone, ye triumph, therefore, at no less expence than the violation of every manly feeling—every moral principle—every claim to courage

rage. Do you stigmatise him with cowardice that attacks the unarmed—can any cowardice equal your own conduct—that, by dint of artifice, vows and falsehood, deceive and subdue innocence, inexperience and truth; What match, alas, is there for deep designing, hypocritical wiles and well-feigned tenderness? by what magic powers shall they detect the spoiler in the lover professed, or apprehend that the man, who, by the fairest of all professions, wins their affections, is only seeking to rob them of their peace, their safety, their friends, and their provision——yes, unhappy believers, yes, a barbed arrow, no skill can extract, instantly transfixes your peace—your fame is blighted—your friends

friends alienated, and your provision rendered dependent on the miserable alternative alone,—the generosity of him who has left you to ignominy and tears, or reiterated prostitution.

The second on this list, is him who as Thompson describes it, can exult in the possession of a mere violated form, who having pursued his helpless victim to the altar, and there obtained her all-reluctant hand. A lover! Heavens—yet the men who thus persecute the women of their choice into a hated marriage—though they have found themselves not only unable to gain an interest in her heart, but are well assured her heart is bestowed upon another, will tell you that love is the
actuator

actuator of their conduct—that it is love that impels them; presuming upon their wealth, their title, or other similar gifts, to take advantage of the vanity, or the ambition, or the tyranny of a father, capable, for the gratification of one or more of those fascinating propensities of sacrificing the happiness of an amiable child, for ever and for ever. Up at this moment rose an old crabbed looking gentleman—so then Mr. Speaker, said he, you think it right, no doubt, for young ladies to play the run-away, when their own choice and that of their father happens not to agree. No, sir, replied the speaker—on the contrary, I think children ought to respect the wishes of their parents, however impossible for them to comply with them, and
of

of course, therefore, that they cannot play the run-away (as you call it) without breaking the laws of nature and morality; not to apply to their parents for consent to marry the man of their choice, is the highest act of disregard, and to marry after having received a refusal, adding mockery and insult to disobedience—but still I must insist upon it, that strong as the ties of filial duty are, when opposed to the claims of reason, of self-preservation, and of conscience actual equality will be found to subsist between them, and accordingly affirm that privilege, of which no laws were ever yet devised to deprive the children of the British sovereign of the just and natural privilege of all the children
upon

upon earth, namely, though not allowed to marry whom they please, to have the power of living single, if preferred to the match provided for them. Very moral, and very reasonable doctrine truly, cried out again the old gentleman—so moral and so reasonable that in my opinion, sir, you deserve to be caned for it; very well, said a smart cockaded gentleman, we are then, from this fine harangue of yours, to conclude that a lady is not intitled to throw herself, how she pleases, into the arms of the man she loves, and whom she is certain adores her. That is my meaning, sir, replied the orator with polite firmness—and I will also, without either hesitation or dismay, pronounce the third character on this list

list of lovers to be him who, because he wears a sword, or can prime a pistol, thinks it incumbent upon him to wade through the blood of his rivals, to the possession of a fair lady's heart. But of those ladies that suffer themselves to be won by such acts of chivalry I shall say little—and still less of the wretch who sacrifices to his pride and revenge a favoured rival—a rival that is avowedly and deservedly dear to the affections of her whom he professes to love, and to deprive him of a happiness he has fairly attained, murders the man that never injured him, and plunges an amiable woman into ceaseless affliction—for these are actions that characterise themselves—or him, similar in virtue, who simply and sole-

ly *pour passe le tems*, carry their de-
voirs from female to female, win, and
leave the hearts they win to weep.

Dr. Young indeed has done, what
I should perhaps (from the high re-
spect I bear the ladies) have been un-
willing to do—not only put the male
coquette and the seducer of innocence
upon a level, but makes it the cause
and the duty of the fair sex to scorn
and dispise them. False education is,
however, as fatal to ladies as to gentle-
men, and as a strong and striking in-
stance of the power education and
fashion have on our minds—Mr. Pope
tells that

———Cæsar born in Scipio's days,
Had soar'd like him, by chastity to praise,

but

but that ambition being the vice of the age in which he lived—ambition was the end whatever was the means—as false education, therefore, makes men libertines, so does it incite women under its baneful influence, instead of discountenancing, reprobating and shunning such cloven footed lovers—on an idea of their success with their sister females, being so many proofs of their spirit, address, courage, and accomplishments—but above all the rest, a flattering enchanting testimony of their own superior perfections in fixing such millions of fugitives, to break off, for his sake, with an admirer of worth, and for the sake of him, who, as doctor Young expresses,

D 2

Has

Has killed his man, and triumph'd o'er his maid,
unblushing, he adds,

For him, as yet unhang'd, to spread their charms
To snatch the dear deluder to their arms,
And amply gives, though treated long amiss,
The man of merit—his revenge in this.

The next I shall mention on this
list of tender lovers—of lovers when
even wearing the bands of hymen, is
the husband—who, from excess of af-
fection—and from excess of affection
alone, he will tell you, embitters the
hours, the days, the years of an ami-
able and innocent woman's life by
cruel suspicions (or pretended suspi-
cions) of her conjugal faith and truth.
It is, however, a strong proof of the
duke of Rochfoucault's sound judgment
and

and knowledge of the heart that he affirms, there is often much more of self-love than real love in jealousy.—

Heaven and earth! is the woman, who, relying upon his tenderness and principles—pleased with his person, pleased with his conversation, and in preference to all the rest of his sex, confides her peace and happiness to his keeping—is she, I ask, intitled to no better treatment, as a proof of the reciprocity of his sentiments, than to have him act the part of a spy, not merely over her actions, but her looks, her words, her every air and movement.

'Tis not sufficient that he is unable to demonstrate her guilt, to secure her from agonizing under his

D 3

capricious

capricious persecutions—her smiles are interpreted by him into levity, and her dejection into sullen rebellion—whatever she says, though her expressions are most carefully and happily chosen, or however well meant her attentions towards him—his mad and sickly humour tortures them into a design to deceive or insult him—conscious in his own breast of the effect, such usage as she meets with from him must naturally have upon even an angel disposition, he forgets that self-respect is a tower of defence for the well formed heart, though not from being miserable from deserving to be so, and has a sweet softening influence on the manners; yet were all these the most ardent of lovers; nor less

less so is the despicable knave and poltron—who, having under every winning appearance possessed himself of a lady's heart and hand, wholly as a key to her fortune—has the effrontery to squander it in pleasures she is not allowed to participate of abroad, and when at home is seldom addressed by him but with moroseness and ill humour—or he who allows himself to consider the woman he has married as a mere domestic animal, created alone to govern his house, obey his nod, and make him her best courtesy for the bread her daily industry intitles her to, over and above the fortune she brought him—but though the highwayman is a gentleman to the first of these last mentioned specimens—

and that the wilds of Africa do not contain a greater savage than the second, yet these also, even these were in the season of courtship ardent lovers.

But turn we now from these pictures of human deformity and human dishonour, to those gentle and generous youths—who find their felicity alone in the felicity of her they love—and who, when they meet with a lady that charms them on a first acquaintance with her, even to constituting them her lover, can, as Mr. Sheridan describes on learning—

———They have blessed another with their heart,
Bid aspiring passion rest and take a brother's part.

for

for not to be self-corrected and self-subdued where an honored and beloved object is not attainable—except by violence that would disgrace any man unsentenced to die an ignominious death, for violating the laws of his country, is such an impeachment of our understanding humanity and principles as to render us unworthy all amiable female consideration.

It is well known that every beauty of language, every soft refinement, and every exertion of genius has been called in to aid, by the several ardent lovers I have enumerated, to paint the tender passion, and render themselves irresistible, let us then look into the arts of a gentle, or more justly to charac-

terize him, a genuine lover ; for, to a genuine lover the happiness of the beloved object is dear at all points. Has she parents, he leaves no means untried to gain their good opinion, for is it not to them that his beloved fair one owes her existence ? Has she a friend in some farther removed relative, to whom she is indebted for her intellectual cultivations—would he not emulate her gratitude and reverence to such friend, as the least deceitful mark of his love for her ; in a word, no article of conduct, no act of condescension—no difficulty or danger would be thought too much in such a cause for his performance, or encounter the cause of preserving her safety, augmenting her fame, or improving her felicity—and surely we
may

may then say with Thompson, that a lady thus won, and gentleman thus devoted to the advancement of her interest, are in like manner with his described pair—

————The happiest of their kind,
When gentlest stars unite, and in one fate,
Their lives, their fortunes, and their beings blend,
nor is it the smallest evil or reproach
of the present age, that because romance has mislaid numberless pairs, that we shut our eyes to the felicity of those who blend the husband with the lover, and in proportion as they bless are blessed; and that I do not fable I call upon the recollections of my present auditors, to point out to them one at least of each sex that have fallen a martyr to conjugal affection—need I

mention the names of a Ruffel and a Drummond? Let then the question never more be made, whether ardent or gentle love bid fairest for matrimonial happiness—for though neither the considerations of justice, reason, honor, or humanity can restrain the first before hymen has granted his sanction, only the last that braves the changes and chances of life, and in despite of blighted or faded beauty, impaired health, ruined fortune, old age, or even death itself, remains unshaken and unextinguished. A buzz of applause run through the assembly—but as true merit is shy, and shuns the blaze—the orator glided away from the company, and was seen no more for that evening.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

NEW DISCOVERIES.

UNENDING were the changes
Mrs. St. John rang on the merits of this evening's debate—she, for her part, she said, had sought only rational amusement on her visits to the DEBATING CLUB—lo! they had proved seminaries of moral instruction beyond any thing that was even to be met with at church—for the young
were

were taught their duty in every essential particular, and in a manner too that could not fail to engage approbation, for the heart alone was spoke to, and then left to make its own reflections and comments, whilst those, who verging like herself, to the full meridian of life, in consequence of the happy hints thrown out, received the laurel wreath, woven by the hand of gratitude, in reward of their services.

Mr. Lawrence professed himself rejoiced that in so gay an age an advocate had arose for the good old English morals and manners—the morals that made children revere their parents, and the manners that exhibited that reverence—it might be the fashion,
he

he added, to think otherwise, but the heart was alone touched by nature, and nature's influences, he felt what it was to be a father, and it was his pride and pleasure to believe his gentle Jessy never forgot she was his child—when melting at some recollections of the deceased mother, and combining them with the fond partiality for this her amiable offspring—he called his Jessy to him, seated her upon his knee, and told her he was certain she would never point the arrow of distress, that must wound his heart.

Miss Jessy, the gentle, and as lovely as gentle Miss Jessy, wept upon his bosom, from the union and influence of sensations for which she had not a name;

the fact shall not be concealed from our readers—for this touching, somewhat arose in her breast, from the involuntary suggestion, how happy her condition must be, who had such a lover as the gentleman with the black patch over one of his eyes had described at the DEBATING CLUB the preceding evening, and such a father as Providence, in its utmost benignity had bestowed upon her.

Yet though the operations of an innocent and untainted disposition produced this softness of sentiment in Miss Lawrence, the high soul of the well read Olivia laughed at all the stuff the young prig (as she was pleased to call him) had talked to them; who
gave

gave him authority, she wondered, to profess a better knowledge of the marks of true affection, than his neighbours, or to trouble the company assembled for entertainment, with his long and gloomy definitions of what it was clear to her he had never, and would never feel, an ardent passion; for her part, she thought every one was the best judge of their own happiness and of the means to promote it, and would not be fettered by the fringed documents of some perhaps hireling orator, who let out his talents for a price, to tickle the ear, or advance the interest of his patron—and moreover she liked not his looks, and was verily of opinion, that the great black patch he appeared with, was nothing more

more than a disguise, to conceal a face he was ashamed of, but as this happened to be not a speech addressed to the company, but merely what passed in the lady's own breast, it was equally unknown and unsuspected by all present.

Lydia, the sweet romantic Lydia, was far otherwise affected by this debate, as her speaking countenance denoted—she knew her mother's destination of her to a youth, she could neither herself love, or inspire with love for her—she nevertheless felt, and smarted under the parental power, and subscribed to the right her mother had to every sacrifice of her affections, though to the wounding of
all

all but her conscience and her truth at the altar—Mr. Dennis Lawrence was so powerfully affected from sympathy—that he might have sat for the figure of delicate distress, with honor to the pencil of the master; his brother, Redman, however, could not forbear so far endangering his aunt's displeasure, as to speak, what Olivia thought, of the orator; namely, that his person was unconfidential, his manner dictatorial, his ideas singular and *outré*—nor could he believe he was patched up from other motives than the consciousness of his own insignificance, to say no worse of him; Mrs. St. John was vexed, and hurt by this insinuation—the 'sensible incognito, she told Mrs. Dickson she was satisfied could be no other than the

the orator of their highest approbation, but as her nephew, Redman, had started a doubt, she begged her friend would make it her business to be truly informed concerning him. The turn of compliment with which he concluded, said she, was so like him—and I am moreover ignorant of any other young gentleman to whom my gratification is an object, but we should not be too modest, Dickson, for as those who visit places of public resort, are admired by numbers that are unnoticed by them—we should be neither too modest or too positive on these occasions.

Mrs. Dickson made a visit to the club room, and was so lucky as to
meet

meet with the man (who had waited three long hours from the hope of seeing her) and was regaled with her dish of coffee, and his agreeable chat as usual; in the course of which she asked him his reason for endeavouring not to be known by the FAMILY PARTY, when speaking on a subject, and in such a manner as to do himself great honor. Mr. Jervais denied he was the speaker—Mrs. Dickson shook her head and bid him beware how he lessened their good opinion of his sincerity—he smiled—she urged her question and assured him Mrs. St. John was beyond measure pleased——until dreading a rival in that Lady's favour; he at length confessed that he was the very man—but that as the question had
been

been privately and generally addressed to the society of which he was only a single member, he was fearful of being deemed too forward, or too presumptuous in taking the lead, where it did not appear he was either expected or desired to exhibit himself. Dickson returned home brim full of pleasing intelligence—of the kindness, and the modesty, and the goodness, and the respect, of Mr. Jervais for Mrs. St. John, and all her friends—as for me, madam, said she, he treated me as if I had been the queen of Sheba, or a person in the like manner qualified, that was come to partake of the wisdom of Solomon. Poor young man, said Mrs. St. John, poor young man—is it not a thousand pities, Dickson,

son,

son, that I cannot throw open my brother's doors to so desirable and deserving a visitor—yet so much does he merit in return for this his last elegant debate—that you will give him an appointment, under the seal of profound secrecy between him and you, and of accidental rencounter with us for the play tomorrow evening, if the bill of fare at either house has sufficient attraction to make us wish to go. Accordingly at dinner this manœuvring gentlewoman dropped a hint, as a sudden thought, that with her brother's leave they would make a party, and Olivia hoped it would be some deep tragedy where ambition, that glorious fault of angels and of gods, might be exhibited to her delighted view—

Lydia,

Lydia, that she should hear from the lips of Romeo—he jests at scars that never felt a wound—and Mrs. St. John, a grand display of a resistless widow's charms — telling Dickson, she wondered much some poet did not chuse to exercise his talents on a subject that would create him such a host of admirers — as painting the magnetic powers of good sense, in a woman of forty, for a woman of forty, no one could be bold enough to deny, might be pitted with success against trifling giddy childish fifteen—as she herself had been a living evidence, for she disdained to take notice of the few years, though it should be even half a dozen that stood between her and that anchor of female maturity.

But

But how was she disappointed when the papers were brought and she discovered, that Steel's Funeral, or Grief Alamode was advertised at Drury-lane; and the Plain Dealer at Covent Garden; and heard both the one and the other pronounced by Olivia and Redman, very excellent pieces—indisposition was however her immediate plea, for declining to see either lady Brumpton scandalize, or the widow Blackmore turn the state of widowhood into ridicule, and had she called it indisposition of mind, she had been a true speaker, and begged it might be settled, (if her health would permit) for them to go to the Clandestine Marriage, which was mentioned at the bottom of the Drury-lane advertise-

ment, to be intended for exhibition the ensuing evening.

A fly leer caught by Mrs. St. John's eye, exchanged between her daughter Olivia and her nephew Redman, petrified her extremely—for it plainly told her, her motive for finessing was clearly understood by them in its fullest latitude—and so much did the altogether—the consciousness of her own feelings, and the construction her conduct admitted of affect her—that as a relieving thought, she resolved to send a pointed question to the DEBATING CLUB, for public canvass, respecting the claims, the merits, and the attractions of widowhood, the very first possible opportunity.

Mr.

Mr. Jervais almost embraced Mrs. Dickson, (his angel of glad tidings) on her delivering the news, that he was invited to approach his beloved Miss Lawrence so near, as sitting in the same box, and conjured her to believe she might rely on his not failing to perform all Mrs. St. John recommended with religious punctuality.

C H A P. V.

A PARTY TO THE THEATRE.

MRS. St. John was out of luck—the play of the Glandestine Marriage did not prove the thing she had promised herself, as to neat and unalayed entertainment—for tho' she was confident Mrs. Headleberg had not one feature applicable to her character—there was no denying that Mr. Sterling possessed a strong caricature resemblance of her brother—add to which,

which, that Lovel and Fanny, she was convinced, were not critically what she could have wished to set before young people's eyes, at a period when even those of mid age found it so difficult to keep up their consequence amongst boys, so recently come from school, as to bear about them a lively dread, and personal tokens of birchen discipline; and chits of girls scarce out of their leading strings—but there was no disappointing them a second time under false pretences, and she therefore endeavoured to make the best of it.

They had not long been seated in the box before the door opened, and Mr. Jervais, dressed in perfect style, as

E 3

Mrs.

Mrs. St. John affirmed, of a gentleman, entered, and was agreeably surpris'd to find them there. How fortunate, madam, cried he, addressing Mrs. St. John, how fortunate I am this evening—for when I left home it was my intention to have gone to Covent-Garden house, whereas my good genius knowing the pleasure that was prepared for me, directed me here, the young ladies were next address'd by him, and each received some witty compliment—except Miss Jessy, for to her he alone bowed with downcast eyes—the young gentlemen shook hands with him, and telling him they hoped this their second meeting would be more happy than the first, chatted with

with him upon indifferent things until the performance began.

Mrs. Dickson had not been unnoticed by him, but as it was not consistent with the etiquette prescribed him, to claim her acquaintance, he only included her in his bow of general recognition.

The play began—Mrs. St. John extolled the author to the skies for his just painting—for what, she said, but perplexity, shame, apprehension, and confusion, could await the young people who flew in the face of their respectable friends and relations—but he had spared her blushes for them, by making them blush so severely for themselves.

Lydia and Dennis Lawrence were silent, but it required very little skill in physiognomy to translate the interest they took in the tender distresses of the young couple; Mr. Jervais sighed from the lesson (to his prejudice) he feared Miss Lawrence would im-bibe of duty to her father, even to the door of her heart, against a beginning inclination for a lover unsanctioned by his immediate introduction; Redman and his cousin Olivia, declared Lovel to be a very pretty fellow for a compting-house clerk, and his conduct as very natural; but allied to nobility, as he was represented to be, his manners were mean, sneaking, pusillanimous, and ridiculous, as for Miss Jessy, whose only wish (whilst a thousand

and passions were throbbing in the breasts of all around her) had been for the curtain to draw up; her attention was occupied and interested by Mrs. Headleberg, Lord Ogleby, Canton, and Mr. Sterling; for as it was impossible she could approve, she forbid herself to pity the lovers; moreover Mr. Sterling's buttered rolls in the dog days, and his dragging Lord Ogleby from prospect to prospect through his villa, was so near a copy of many recollected scenes she had been a distant spectator of in her travels about the environs of London, that the picture of them infinitely diverted her, but however *outré*, with respect to polite breeding, she conceived the altogether to be—she conceived it nevertheless so ac-

cordant with the good old fashioned manners of England—that she liked, in the very moment she most heartily laughed at the contrast between the ruins of a foppish peer, and the health, wealth, good humour, and honest importance of a British merchant, born and brought up within the gates of the metropolis, and an enemy to fribbles, foolish parade, and affectation.

Mrs. St. John, on whose mind the high coloured ridicule on city manners, did not sit quite so easy, observed to Mr. Jervais that the distinctions between the east and the west end of the town were now almost worn out, except in their mere nominal and literal sense—the distinction of exterior being

no more for at least the last half century, however that residence remained; then casting a look of marked self-complaisance over her own appearance, and the appearance of her family, seemed to demand, if aught was visible to bespeak them unalied to fashion and elegance.

Mr. Jervais detected the meaning of this appeal, just in time to prevent his losing an opportunity of singing forth Mrs. St. John's praises, not only with her own consent, but by her actual invitation, the excellence of her taste, the excellence of her understanding, and the excellence of her conduct were the delightful, and heart-delighting themes with which he regaled

her ear; but at length constraining herself to forego so luxurious a feast, she tapped him with her fan on his shoulders, his hands, and his cheek, and told him he had too much, far too much of the courtier about him to be a fit acquaintance for her and her FAMILY PARTY, and that she therefore believed she must (in order to secure them from polite contamination) have the wisdom and the resolution to break hands with him.

Mr. Jervais had taken the lady's fan from her, during this little scene of gallantry between them, and held it gaily open in his hand, but on the conclusion of this speech was glad to conceal the trifle he was sensible over-

spread

spread his face, by hiding behind it, the bare idea of incurring so severe a punishment, for even the worst sin it was in his nature to be guilty of, being scarcely supportable by his feelings, and to relieve himself coughed aloud.

The soft soul'd Lydia alone, of the whole party, perceived his manœuvring—but it so much resembled what she was often compelled to practise, that it struck her on the instant—alas, poor youth, said she, mentally, he is then a lover and I most sincerely pity him. Having recovered himself he told her he thought he ought not to arm her against him a second time—presenting, yet withdrawing her fan from her—do as you please, cried she, laughing,

laughing, but take this information along with you—the bauble will be no trophy of victory over me, for to restore it to its true owner, you must give it to my niece. The fan was put into his bosom and mentioned by him no more the whole evening.

Mrs. St. John was so wrapped up in flattery and self-applause, that every tittle of Mr. Jervais's conduct beyond her immediate interest in it escaped her observation, but not so Mrs. Dickson, who sat within hearing of all that had passed, and thought if she had any skill in such matters, Miss Lawrence, not her aunt, was the object of Mr. Jervais's adoration; but this thought was locked up safe in her own breast.

But

But though it is obvious that this gentleman debator was prompt to pay court to and take advantage of this good lady's constitutional foible, he was not a dissembler by practice, for Heaven had given him a generous heart, and his friends much intellectual cultivation—his temper was benevolent and his manners naturally pleasing, and he was wont (for the kindest and honestest purposes) to assume the likeness of those he wished should approve him, and were of course much approved by him; and as Mrs. St. John, with all her follies, (of which vanity was the sole cause) was from the care, he understood, she had taken of her brother and his children, in his estimation a very good sort of woman, —he

—he would not in all probability have failed to celebrate her opinion—quote her observations, and pay her every winning attention—had her niece been only seven years old instead of seventeen.—But to return,

Mrs. St. John's claim to fashionable importance was indeed, this evening particularly ill timed, from lack of support on all hands; for though her brother's coach was always at her command, and thanks to the herald office, and her brother's liberality, made a very genteel figure, yet, yet much remained unpossessed by her to bespeak her what she announced herself to be—allied to, or in any degree connected with, the great world.

For

For when seated in the box, in the full view of all the brilliant spectators, not one bow, curtsy, or other token of recognition did she or her family receive—from those she wished should be considered as her equals—whereas, on the contrary—she had the confusion to be every now and then saluted from the pit by persons she had been very ready to accept civilities from at the DEBATING CLUB, and who little suspected therefore that their polite notice of her in the theatre would be deemed a disgrace.

The piece over, the ladies all turned round to converse with Mr. Jervais—and even the sweet Jessy told him she was happy to see him well, and the
entertainment

entertainment being the Speaking Pantomime of Harlequin's Invasion—this young lady was greatly pleased with it, and communicated her sentiments on several repeated occasions, to that effect, to Mr. Jervais, inso-much that the only disagreeable moment he had to complain of (except whilst he was smarting under Mrs. St. John's wit (as already described) was the moment of her bidding him adieu.

Redman Lawrence, and his cousin Olivia, laughed for two whole hours the next morning, at the likeness between Mrs. St. John and Mrs. Headleberg, my mother's vanity, and city ambition, cried she, to a T; and Redman, forgetting all his father's and his
own

own obligations to his aunt, protested it was his real belief, that every creature in the house was as sensible as themselves of their similitude of character—for that he had observed a thousand eyes, and a thousand titterings levelled at her during the evening. Nor did their vivacity spare Miss Lawrence or Lydia, calling the first a breathing statue, the second an arcadian nymph, into whose hand they had wished to have put a crook, as also into the hands of her dying swain, Mr. Dennis—until it occurred to them that his mercantile genius, and commercial spirit of enterprise would be much better represented by one of the flags, carried by the aldermanic body, on a Lord Mayor's day.

In

In a word, though strange to tell, this play of the Clandestine Marriage produced a most extraordinary change in the private behaviour of this young gentleman and lady, and Mrs. St. John's reign over them was reprobated by them for ever—they were nevertheless compelled, whilst they remained under the same roof with her, to keep up some little outward shew of respect—and even to Mr. Jervais; they called her in future, in their private interviews, by no other name than that of Mrs. Headleberg, and him the preacher—the disciple of a tabernacle, and never turned their eyes towards them but in order to pick out new food for satire.

Mrs.

Mrs. Dickson, who had long been dissatisfied with them, in the main, and was too wise to suppose there could be an effect without a cause, was certain (to use her self-language) some mischief was brewing in that quarter, which sooner or latter would burst forth on Mrs. St. John's head like a thunder bolt, and be productive of much mortification, if not distress, to all their other relations.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

A DEBATING CLUB SCENE.

OLIVIA and Redman were now come to so perfect an understanding that they contrived to have their stated periods for meeting, to ridicule the foolish heads and chicken hearts of the rest of the family.

A fine time I should have of it indeed, said Redman, in the arms of
my

my cara sposa, if I was weak enough to let your mother chuse for me, whose soul is replete with arcadian whims; and I, said Olivia, married to my cousin Dennis, should be blessed with his commercial calculations.

But how to prevent the evil is the point we ought to look to. My mother, replied Olivia, I thank her, has made me an adept in the science of advice—for many a lesson, by the assistance of Dickson, has she, I am persuaded, caused to be dealt out to us from the rostrum—and it is but fair we should now begin to retaliate.

You know, Redman, the destruction the old Roman King Severus brought

brought upon himself and children by opposing their wishes, and instead of permitting them to chuse for themselves — causing each of the Julias to take a husband of an opposite disposition to their own, which is the instance I will suggest to the club for a debate, for though one of them does not apply to me (except in the contrariety of humour to my corydon) the other is an exact copy of Lydia—when, if my mother takes not the hint, to give up her politics, we must seek for a further remedy—there is no opening your father's eyes to her folly and duplicity, and wherefore should we trouble ourselves to prove her a sinner, to a man that is resolved to canonize her for a saint.

Redman

Redman highly approved this proposal, and a question was accordingly dispatched by them to the club:—

“Whether it was not warring against Heaven to oppose the sympathy of young minds—and compel the noble and illustrious to yoke with the narrow and illiberal, and vice versa, in order merely to advance some family wishes, or to gratify some family pique—together regardless of the consequences.”

Mrs. St. John, all unprepared from being all unsuspecting of the amusement which awaited her, was in unusual fine spirits—so fine, that having consented with the best grace imagin-

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able,

able, on the instant she was asked to accompany her young friends, declared, as they were on their way, if she could only reconcile it to her, (perhaps, indeed, rigid notions of female decorum) she would, herself, ascend the rostrum and prove to the men, that there was not the monopoly of sound reasoning, judicious distinction, and native eloquence amongst them which they had the modesty to claim—but that the sexes were in reality, what Steel styled them, in his *Christian Hero*—"both equal, and both superior, as occasion suited their respective talents,"—not forgetting his high compliment, "that the woman had Heaven's second thought in her formation and endowments."

Mrs.

Mrs. Dickson said she had been often sorry a lady of such powers was not a quaker, they would then have been called forth into exercise for the benefit of her hearers.

Miss Lawrence said, she dared believe her aunt thought with the poet, Mr. Pope, that

"A woman's noblest station was retreat."

Mrs. St. John, with some dignity, replied, the best rules had their exceptions, but that though she had often been paid a similar compliment to Dickson's, she did not imagine it possible for a person of her extreme and nice sensibility to speak with advantage in public, and was therefore well satis-

fied to move within the narrow sphere the pride of mankind had constituted the sphere of her sex. On their coach stopping, Mr. Jervais ventured, for the first time, to fly and offer Mrs. St. John his hand, in character of an acquaintance, which he presumed the evening he had passed with them at the theatre authorized him to do—when, as he conducted her in, she, in a few words, informed him of the sublime ideas with which her heart was fraught respecting the claims and the merits of the female world, and added that she should be very glad, when convenient, to hear his opinion, and moreover was so abundantly, and unprecedentedly gracious as to bid him give her his company. Erect as an emperor
he

he therefore led her into the club room, and elated as a conqueror, took his seat by her.

The debate having opened with a little introductory critique on the manners of the age—a tall Scotchman arose, and very abruptly declared, he knew of no reproach at this liberal period equal to the unrepealed marriage act—an act that had solely originated from the pride and arrogance of those parents, who thought themselves intitled to wage war against nature, and nature's laws.

Mrs. St. John started—Miss Lawrence stared, and Mr. Jervais was beyond measure astonished. — It

should, however, methinks, resumed the Scotchman, be sufficient to cure parents for ever of the sin of fettering or crossing their children's inclinations, to read the dreadful consequences on historical record, of such austere and unjustifiable conduct—no one instance of which is more striking or alarming than that of Severus the fourth, king of Rome, and his two daughters—daughters, that if permitted to have chose for themselves, would have been preserved from murder and adultery, dire crimes, which, no doubt, would be found registered against the causer, not the perpetrators thereof, at the great day of general account.

This

This attack upon parental authority and impeachment of parental wisdom, was so flagrant—that Mrs. St. John found herself, and was apparently much agitated, whilst Olivia and her cousin Redman's countenance were lighted up by exulting smiles.

The story, cried this able and refined orator is too well known for it to be necessary for me to relate it on this occasion, and I shall therefore only take leave to say, that this really wise and good king was so foolish and cruel a father, as to try whether his poor deluding plans, could alter the nature of things, and give happiness to those in a matrimonial union, whose hearts were formed of as repulsive materials

as the elements, by blending the mildness of the dove, with the fire of the lion—the crouching spirit of the spaniel, with the unsubduable greatness of the war-horse—what the reward of his impious attempt to counteract the unalterable decrees of fate were, is a catastrophe our humanity may pity, but our reason must think just, for the misfortunes of parents result from their own perverseness, tyranny or self presumption, the gods are acquitted, and their children exculpated, let whatever evils ensue.

There is a period, nevertheless, far distant from the extreme point of parental warfare, which liberates the human mind from subjection.—Let those

those then who are acquainted with this Roman history have the wisdom to constitute the catastrophe alluded to, the beacon for them to steer by, and those who at present know it not, read it as the warning voice of Heaven to deter them from doing either directly or indirectly likewise, this was too much for human endurance.—

The orator retired with a bow of self-approbation, and Mrs. St. John was over-whelmed with confusion. Mr. Jervais, cried she, in a low voice, as the last effort of ingenuity to antidote the poison of this corrupt and daring doctrine, it is now in your power to confer an everlasting obligation upon me. Jervais was electrified by the sound—arise therefore in defence of

the parental cause, the parental privileges, having first assumed some happy disguise, and you shall only have to ask, to obtain your desired reward.

It was enough—his exit and his re-entrance was like a shaft of lightening—and the rumour ran that a young Cantab, was about to speak to the question of the evening. Immediately a very florid and highly powdered spark, on a silence taking place, thus bespoke the company.

“However the unfortunate Severus failed in the accomplishment of his wishes—his politics on an investigation of them will be found agreeable to rational conduct, for as discords
can,

can, (by the finger of the master) be touched into harmony—so a union of the grave and the lively, the mild and the imperious, when the heart is not unprincipled, has often been known to constitute a happy marriage—and he would therefore unhesitatingly affirm, that it was the natural vice of each, not the contrast in their tempers, which occasioned the crimes of which the children of Severus were guilty. Moreover there were manifold testimonies within the reach of even the commonest observation, that men of a studious and contemplative turn to please the women they loved, would readily consent to mix in cheerful parties, and social scenes—thereby in all probability preserving themselves from

becoming misanthropes and humourists; and women whose vivacity would unallayed have hurried them into dangerous errors—who had learned to regulate themselves by every happy rule of domestic merit, and domestic happiness; indeed he did not deny he said that parents would do well to give up thankless and ungovernable children, before their efforts to reclaim them were carried so far as to endanger their own safety—but the parent's love was not to be extinguished until some fatal catastrophe, either to themselves or worthless offspring, evinced the impossibility of being useful to them, and thence would have the boldness to declare, that whoever could set up the monstrous guilt of the elder Tullia and
her

her incestuous paramour as an argument against the exercise of parental advice, and parental authority to a certain latitude, in order to bring to bare a union they had at heart, were as far degenerated from the female character, and approximated, of whatever sex, as nearly to the diabolical, as those wretches thus damned to everlasting fire."

Mr. Jervais being seated on the off side of Mrs. St. John, from the rest of her companions, was luckily not so much as missed by Olivia or Redman, luckily perhaps for his personal safety, and having made a few more strong and able remarks in defence of the parental dignity, power, and virtues, returned to his vacated seat, and was repaid all his services,

services, by receiving a friendly shake of the hand from that no less high than condescending gentlewoman, Mrs. St. John, at the same time that she whispered in his ear, my friendship is yours, and you may always rely on my voice and interest. Ah, sighed Jervais, heavily, I suppose in every particular except where the felicity of my life is bound up — your lovely niece's favourable opinion of me.

Olivia and Redman Lawrence were first disconcerted, and next engaged by this bold retort, and being strongly persuaded from some home strokes received, that poor Jervais was at the bottom of the business, set it down on their memory the very first opportunity

nity in their power to make him re-
prisals.

.CHAP. VII.

A NEW EFFORT TO MRS. ST. JOHN'S
HEART.

MRS. Dickson, who in the sim-
plicity of her heart, believed
all Mr. Jervais's declarations of the
pleasure it gave him, (she well under-
stood on account of her connections)
to see her, and as every dish of choco-
late

late she drank with him seemed better than the preceding, and his conversation too became more and more agreeable, often dropped in, as he earnestly desired she would, and passed half an hour with him—wishing very sincerely from pure kindness and goodwill to Miss Lawrence, to see the day when she should have her established lover, as well as her cousins. The truth indeed was, that though Mrs. Dickson's attachment to Mrs. St. John was not dissolved—it had received a very severe shock from that lady's behaviour when her niece was ill, infomuch that the good woman fancied she could look back to the moment when Mrs. St. John would infinitely have preferred beholding her most generous brother

deprived

deprived of his daughter Jeffy, the support and solace of his existence, to bring her own interest into hazard—for would she ever have sent for Mr. Jervais to have spoke comfort to her; she would say, if it had not been for he spirited head she made against the cruelty of wishing to keep him away when her heart would always answer no. Yet in these *tête à tête*s with the young gentleman she observed—he never once led her to mention Miss Lawrence more, or sought to spin out the subject, when she herself had started it—whilst Mrs. St. John, on the contrary, was ever more talked of by him; a circumstance her unacquaintance with the paradoxical conduct of lovers made her doubt whether Mrs.

St.

St. John was not really in the right when she concluded herself to be the sole object of his regard, and she totally wrong in supposing it to be Miss Lawrence.

But little as Mrs. Dickson was aware of it, so light and soft was his hand, he evermore contrived to wire-draw on his favourite subjects. One day in particular having caused her to speak of Mr. Lawrence's deceased wife, stumbled, she knew not how, on the history of his friend also—not forgetting to add the agreeable article of contract between the two merchants, to bring up Miss Jeffy on the one hand and the son on the other, to love
one

one another from their cradle as man and wife.

Mr. Jervais heard no more, though she talked to him without ceasing for twenty successive minutes, until she announced poor Mr. Lawrence's grief for the death of this his intended son-in-law, when "Richard became himself again."

She then launched out into an account of the great wealth he was master of; his almost unequalled love of his daughter, and concluding with saying, happy would be the man that gained her for a wife, for she then was in her temper, as well as in her person, an earthly treasure.

Mr.

Mr. Jervais's mind was a second time thrown off its center, and he was near breaking his solemn resolution, never to take advantage of Mrs. Dickson's good opinion of him, in any respect that might endanger the loss of Mr. Lawrence's or his sister's friendship—no, cried he, the poor good unsuspecting woman shall not find an enemy where she believes she has a friend—let me endeavour to constitute whoever else I may an instrument of my access, to Mr. Lawrence's family.

Mrs. Dickson was on the point of taking her leave, when it luckily, (as she called it) popped into her head, to tell him Mrs. St. John ardently desired to increase her obligations to him,
for,

for, do you know, fir, said she, the world of gentlemen play-writers and public speakers, like yourself, have never yet had the goodness to write nobly, or speak up kindly in the praise of widows.

To me, cried the gallant Mr. Jervais, all Mrs. St. John's wishes in my power to accomplish are heard as commands, it is my wish to comply with. But I believe, on reflection, I have expressed myself wrong, for it is not widows, fir, said Dickson, but—voluntary widowhood—aye, now I have her very words—on the merits of voluntary widowhood from motives of either attachment to the deceased, or tenderness to his surviving offspring
but

—but above all the rest, in cases of collateral generosity. Mr. Jervais thanked his kind friend for the hint, and immediately resolved to play off one more powerful battery against Mrs. St. John's heart, in order to win her, if she was not invincible to favour him in his dearest aspirations.

Mrs. Dickson departed, he accordingly set to work, and prepared the following question for advertising,

“Whether the widow that died of a broken heart, in consequence of losing her husband, or she that lived to do honor to his memory in her care of their children, gave the strongest proof of regard, unallayed by self-love for the deceased.”

Mrs.

Mrs. St. John perceived a somewhat of peculiar satisfaction in Mrs. Dickson's face, and therefore concluded she had seen her friend Mr. Jervais, his civilities to her, always by setting her at unity with self producing that effect, and so closely did she press her to be communicative, that contrary to her settled intention; she frankly owned she had, and that he assured her he would take an early opportunity of making widows of all ranks and complexions amends for the neglect so long shewn them at the DEBATING CLUB.

Mrs. St. John professed herself much indebted to her friend, Mrs. Dickson's diligence in her service, for, said she,
what

what can be more grateful than those services that give pleasure to the heart —therefore speak your wishes; there is a new piece now playing, with great applause, called “ Know your own mind,” and I will, this very evening, take you to see it, if it will be agreeable to you. Agreeable, madam! replied Mrs. Dickson, that you may be certain it will, but I think there is another person, I need not say who, that richly deserves to be of the party. But what can we do, said Mrs. St. John, would it not impeach our prudence, and give us the appearance of being too much attached to the really charming youth, if we shew him we cannot enjoy even a dramatic exhibition without him.

Mrs.

Mrs. Dickson, by whom good natured acts were deemed a million times preferable to all the dissembled forms of fashion, cried, dear madam, how you surprise me, one hour you call yourself under ceaseless obligations to this young gentleman, and the next make a doubt of it, whether it can be right by a little friendly notice, to let him see you remember as much—but the inconvenience, Dickson—the trouble it would be to you: If your objections are reduced to that, cried Dickson, they shall soon be removed, for I promise you it will be no more trouble to me to do a civil thing, than to make your compliments, and so forth, when we have a point to gain; Mrs. Dickson, therefore put on

her hat and cloak with much greater alacrity than she pulled them off, and whilst Mrs. St. John went to announce her design to her brother, of treating the children to the new comedy, conveyed the intelligence to Mr. Jervais, and vows of everlasting regard were exchanged by them, in consequence of the esteem he declared he held her in, for being thus attentive to the promotion of his happiness.

But Mrs. Dickson, said he, I believe it will be most adviseable for me, in order to secure myself from suspicion, to bow first to the FAMILY PARTY from the pit, and let Mrs. St. John's encouragement to join her in the box be my sanction for so doing;

Mrs.

Mrs. Dickson approved of this proposal, and bidding him not fear, but all would turn out to his wishes, took her leave, and was soon at home again, so soon that Mrs. St. John (as a small stroke of flattery) told her she must have flown, and had evinced by her expedition, some great writers assertain, but she could not on the instant recollect who, that affection, or inclination, were the wings of the soul.

When Mrs. St. John mentioned her design of going to the play, Redman Lawrence complained of the tooth-ach, and Olivia said she would with all her heart, if her mother would dispense with her company, stay at home—send for the comedy, and read it to

her cousin and thought it might turn out very pleasing to all parties to tell their opinions at supper.

Then cried Mr. Dennis, with unusual animation, I shall for once have the honor of being your sole cicisbeo—and my cousin Lydia will be happy to take care of my sister. Well said Dennis, I love you for your good humour and spirit, said Mr. Lawrence, and dare believe I shall hear a very good report of your conduct and generalship. Poor Dickson, said Olivia, laughing, you seem, sir, to consider her as a mere non-entity—instead of the able chaperon we have always found her.

Mrs.

Mrs. St. John was alarmed lest her daughter Olivia, who was evidently on the pert pin should let drop a hint about Mr. Jervais, and therefore wishing equal happiness to all, Mr. Lawrence went out quite satisfied.

When arrived at the theatre, who should be passing by, Mr. Dennis Lawrence said, but Mr. Jervais, and putting out his head without waiting his aunt's fiat, called after him, and brought him to pay his compliments to the ladies. Can you do better, sir, said the all-gracious Mrs. St. John, if not positively engaged, than to join us, and give the author, for I see it is his night, your five shillings, as an humble tribute to his merit. The foot board

let down Mrs. St. John gave him her hand, and as all restraints were removed by the absence of Olivia and Redman—Mr. Dennis led his beloved Lydia, having just remembered to beg Jeffy would take hold of Mrs. Dickson's arm.

Mrs. St. John admired the mother and two daughters, in the piece, who appeared, she said, like three sisters, which was always the case, when a lady married very young, and her children started up into early womanhood—winding up this observation with a significant look at her Lydia.

In

In the second act, however, Miss Lawrence's tender feelings were greatly shocked—by one of the characters (in every other respect a very pleasing one, who, coming in, and finding a large party) exclaims

“ Aye, here you are, crowded together like the people in the black hole at Calcutta.”

Heaven defend me, cried Miss Lawrence, having read the heart rending particulars of the instance alluded to only the day before—can it be possible for an author capable of writing such a piece as this, to conceive the idea of pleasantry can be struck out of so distressing a similitude—nor, said Ly-

dia, is it less wonderful, that a British audience, and a polished manager should be equally inattentive to the only blemish, and that so glaring a one, in the whole piece.

The scene where the general lover is found upon his knees to the mother was greatly enjoyed by Mrs. St. John, it makes me recollect, said she to Mr. Jervais, the story of the rival mother and daughter, I have met with in the course of my reading, but with all the allurements of youth, the mother there bears away the prize, and Miss is left to lament her inferior powers and perfections, (except a stolen glance, and that a most guarded one at Miss Lawrence, poor Mr. Jervais,

vais had a terrible evening of it, for Mrs. St. John was not content with sips, she would needs obtain whole draughts of that sweet cordial, flattery—however, as the only alternative was to pay the price, or forego the delight of seeing the object of his tenderest attachment, he at length got through the evening, and was permitted as an act of grace to hand all the ladies, except Lydia, into the carriage, her cousin and her staying a few moments behind, to view, as they told Mrs. St. John, the scenes, forgetting, as she forgot also, that the green curtain, on the conclusion of the performance, always obstructed every such view.

Mr. Jervais made his bow and was retiring, when the good natured Dennis said, if he was bound for the city, he was certain his aunt and sister would not think themselves incommoded by giving him a cast, as he might sit between them two, and they should even then fall short by one individual of their usual FAMILY PARTY. Do as you like, cried Mrs. St. John, and Jervais ascended the side of the carriage, but instead of being granted the proposed seat, Mrs. St. John took care to render herself a wall of brass between him and her niece, insomuch that had he not looked forward with hope to future favours—he would have dearly repented accepting the offer.

They

They sat him down at the mansion-house, and Dennis, at parting, professed the most cordial regard for him, and regretted, on his being out of sight, that they could not take him home to supper.

When arrived in ——— square, she found Mr. Lawrence gone to bed, and Miss Olivia and her cousin, Redman, battling it away at piquet—the comedy, she said, was not to be had in their neighbourhood; and so they were endeavouring to console themselves under their disappointment, by playing at cards.

Mrs. St. John shewed some tokens of displeasure at this information; she

thought her nephew would never have practised artifice, she said, to avoid favouring her with his company, and it was very plain his tooth ach was not violent when he could sit so much at his ease down to a game that required attention; supper was brought in, however, and no more passed on the subject that night; and the question the next morning respecting widows being advertised, she lost the trace of it for ever.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

OF THE SAME NATURE AS THE FORE-
GOING.

MRS. St. John, earnest that her brother should be witness of the triumph, and celebrity, she was confident she should receive from the announced question; artfully contrived to stumble insensibly upon it, she said, at breakfast, that no idea of preconcertion might arise in his breast, on

her asking him, for the honor of widowhood, and she trusted, for the honor of his sister, to favour her with his company to hear the discussion of it.

Mr. Lawrence consented, and smiling, observed he was glad to find so great an improvement in the taste and temper of the age, that widows, instead of the butt of coarse raillery, and unprovoked ridicule, they had hitherto been, to the reproach of many able pens, were likely to find a man sufficiently sensible to discover, and sufficiently generous to become, the advocate of their merits—for that he was well convinced that though the many might discredit the state of widowhood—there was an amiable few intitled

to first rate praise and first rate estimation. Mrs. St. John bridled with delight, and Dennis offering to walk with his father, they all set off rather before their usual time—so impatient was the lady to hear her own eulogium. But the question being announced a little dapper Welchman, who having exchanged the kind manners, peculiar to that pastoral principality for the hardiness and bronze of fashion, and conceiving it to be the test of fine breeding to laugh sober and modest merit out of countenance, (to the great dissatisfaction of Mrs. St. John, even before he opened his mouth,) arose and thus addressed the company.

The

The state of widowhood, however closely succeeding the state of female bondage, as matrimony is generally deemed, appears, from the conduct of most ladies, to be considered by them as a state of non-existence. Are they rich—generous creatures—how prompt we evermore find them to make the fortune of some lucky impudent fellow, that is so far a master of arts as to win them to his wishes. Are they young—then is their liberty alone prized by them for the power it gives them of renouncing it—an opportunity of which, is never disregarded by them. Are they old—they feel it is not good to be alone, and so look abroad, even through their tears for the dear deceased, for a worthy successor

cessor—the worth of well dissembled love for them. Are they beautiful—let no one become the devotee of despair for their sakes—their charms shall make a second, a third, and a fourth husband happy, if their destiny only favours them with means, and I call upon those who can, to tell me when a widow was ever found unattainable. Does she weep the dead—it is to touch the hearts of the living—does she wear her sables, is it not to shew her person to the greatest advantage, and tell the story of her loss?—is she silent—it is in order to excite our desire to hear the music of her tongue; and if she talks, is it not to lead our affections captive?

Young

Young girls, with all the charms of youthful bloom, are like Polyphemus in the fable—strong but blind—and of course all their arrows are random shot, but the widow knows how to force every avenue of the human heart, and in despite of the owner's consent, to erect herself a throne therein. Do we resist—it only animates her attacks—our vanity, our generosity, our ambition, our compassion—all, all, are interested and operated upon by turns, until we hail her conqueress. For my own part, continued this great orator, I fear no other part of the female sex—but widows—their resistless wiles—their resistless lures (Mr. Lawrence stole a side glance at his sister—is this, thought he, the man I was brought by

by my sister to hear, who with the bold and ratling tongue of saucy and audacious eloquence, dares thus to wound an unequal, and unchallenging individual) I alone ask of Heaven, to secure me from the rencounter, not to lead me into temptation and danger.

Mrs. St. John felt as if all eyes were turned upon her, for the author and object of this most offensive harangue, forgetting that orators derive their highest reputation from the light and shade, an opposition in opinion gives a question, and found herself so little able to throw off her mortification and chagrin, as to be half inclined to quit the club-room abruptly, but before she came to a positive resolution how to act,

act, it was rumoured that a gentleman of consequence was rose up, in vindication of the ladies, and each found was hushed—each ear attentive to catch his soft, his honeyed sentences.

Jervais was so great an adapt in the science of speaking—that he could change his natural tones and cadence at will, accordingly when Mrs. St. John beheld him dressed out in a full suit of black, and with his face almost buried alive in a scientific wig—even she herself doubted who it might be, until he came to touch upon such points as she well knew could be only of her own suggestion—testified it to be Mr. Jervais, and finally identified him.

him. For the honor of our understanding, said this orator, and the honor of the human heart, (notwithstanding the extraordinary things we have just heard) the custom of painting the female sex, in like manner as the pen of error paints the person of lucifer, with imaginary characteristics of deformity, is now no more.

The lively gentleman, who to display his wit, and indulge his vivacity, has spoke on a question of first rate concern to every feeling heart—has thought proper, instead of attempting either to inform or to convince his auditors of the reality of what he dared to advance, to devote the best exercise of his oratorical powers to their amusement—

amusement—they have laughed its true, but as Churchill says,

——“on reflection’s birth will wonder at themselves, and blame them most.

Softness and constancy (hear it ye traducers of the sex, and controvert it if you can,) moreover are the inmates of unwarped and an uncorrupted female mind—what dangers therefore they have encountered, and what distresses endured, to prove their unshaken, their heroic attachment to the man they love, history abounds with. But I return to my subject—for it is not what testimonies ladies have given of their conjugal tenderness, but how they honor in consequence of such tenderness the men they survive, is the present

present question. Did I therefore ask you, right honourable lady, from either self-love or natural despondence seek an asylum in the grave alone—surely it was the man of her wishes—the friend of her life, the dear companion she regretted—yes, sir, thus far I perceive you are about to tell me (addressing a gentleman who had rose to speak, even thus far I will acknowledge what I am aware you are going to demand of me) that self was interested—but if self-love alone had influenced her conduct, would she not have chased the self-reproach from her heart to which her life became a victim—for she was heard frequently to declare, she believed she could not have survived the poignant distress into which she was plunged, but that, by
her

her persuasion, on the kindest motives of her husband to participate the derision that cost him his life, she appeared to herself, however innocent, the cause of his death.

This lady had not, however, from the nature of her high condition—those ties of maternal duty, which, like a bar of adamant stands between the weakest and most amiable part of the human species, and despair, when robbed by the rude and cruel hand of death, of their best source of happiness—the necessary superintendance of her little ones—in whom she beholds not merely her own offspring, but the children of him so deservedly dear to her—their protection, their cultivation therefore
suspends

suspends her sorrows, and to their service she devotes her future life.

If the grave has knowledge of the living—if paternal love exists beyond the mansions of mortality—can any monument of conjugal commemoration be comparable to this, illustrious women, wherever ye are to be found (for as the earth teems not with jems)—wherefore should we expect a profusion of those that are most excellent in the human race, rendering by your fame and the accomplishment of your most ardent aspirations, your reward, as a mother, surrounded by her helpless children, left in slender circumstances—receive an offer to assist and bring them forward with decent learn-

ing—though her affections are buried in the tomb of her husband—she will compel herself to accept of, and esteem the man that has the generosity to love her under all her widowed disadvantages, and her children will be taught by her to revere him for the deed. Besides, by what erroneous consequences are we led to conceive there is merit in persisting in grief—for as Shakespeare tells us obstinate condolment shews a will most incorrect towards Heaven.

Addison divides the widowed world into two classes; those who inspire love, and those that excite pity; and true it is, that a cheerful and agreeable temper never appears in so engaging

engaging a point of view (who need be told that it is a most powerful magnet) as in a widow of good sense and good information—who uses, not abuses, the privileges of her condition, and conceives of neither fear or blame enjoys the pleasures of social intercourse, —converses with ease, frankness and liberality, and incapable herself of misconstruing the actions of others, cannot teach herself to apprehend misconstruction—and should it so happen some one of the gentlemen, thus admitted to approach her on friendly terms, should discover, that with her conversation he forgets all time, all seasons, and is unable to figure to his imagination a higher happiness than conversing with her through life—Can

we, on whatever pretext, charge such a woman with having preached arts to win his approbation, or conceive ourselves intitled to either ridicule her acceptance of him, as an act of self-gratification, or to accuse her of cruelty or breach of principle if she refuses, and declares, that conversation, not a lover, is her object. Wherein (otherwise) let me ask, does the value of intellectual cultivation, or the advantages of independence consist—shall refinement be doomed by narrow mindedness and ill nature to dwell alone in the shade, lest the wishes of the ambitious, or the caprices of pride should be wounded or mortified—the woman that possesses such high endowments and accomplishments with unostentatious good humour

humour—does such a woman deserve no better fate I beseech you, than to be charged with studied designs upon those hearts, she charms through the ear.

The gentleman who has just ceased speaking has talked much of an impatience in the ladies to renounce their widowhood, and rush a second time (as he phrases it) into conjugal bondage. But if the manners of the present age are really such as he has described—the ladies, by this conduct, can only be said to exchange one state of bondage for another—for when free she is to be censured, whether easy to be obtained, or invincibly unattainable—she has as little reason to be vain of her tears as her fables.

Men and women were, we may be assured, intended for the friends and the companions of each other, but in what stage of female existence is it that woman have it in their power to avail themselves of their birth-right claims in this instance? Is it in early youth—alas, are they not in early youth taught to believe that they tread dangerous ground, and with equal fear and caution must listen to every individual of the other sex that approach them unauthorized by the parental sanction. Is it when wives—who is there that can hesitate to put a negative upon that demand—for if fair and young, though they should be safe at every other point, the friend the bosom friend of their husbands—him whom
he

he delights most to honor, and in whom he most confides, will think it his duty as a gallant man, to mislead the consequential approbation of his wife's endeavour to supplant him in her affections, and thus are we returned again to widowhood, where we find the sex fettered and insulted on all sides.

The bold and the vain watching every turn of countenance to interpret them into invitation, and catching at every word to turn them into expressions of encouragement—nevertheless, ladies, (I mean that glorious part of the sex, whose hearts are pure, whose conduct is amiable, and whose principles are correct)—consult not the mirror of either envy, malice or un-

charitableness for approbance of the dress, of either your persons or minds —let nature and good sense be your guides in every instance, and fame and happiness shall be yours.

I must, however, beg leave to mention one state of widowhood that commands admiration, and should I at this time have an auditress of that character, let her drink, for once at least, at the fountain head of well-earned praise—I mean the widow, who, though yet in her prime, in order to persevere in kind offices towards, not only her own children, but the children of parents she loves from ties of consanguinity, of gratitude, or of long

long tried unity, becomes as Pope expresses it,——

When all the world conspires to praise,

——Deaf, and will not hear,

who foregoes her own wishes, to make others happy, tenderly watching over their sleeping hours (if such services are required by them from indisposition, accident, or affliction) and devoting her days to the formation of their minds and manners, who refuses successive offers for their sakes, and moreover rendering their home pleasant and their excursions abroad profitable—render themselves in every article of generous and essential attention—at once the friend of their own offspring, the maternal guardian of such of their young friends as have no

longer a mother—and the enlivener, the sustainer of the house of the widower — the source of all his best hopes, the author of all the best comforts he enjoys.

(Mr. Lawrence opened now one button of his waistcoat, and then a second, to give himself room to breathe, and Miss Jessy turned her loving eyes, suffused by grateful tears, up towards her beloved aunt.) That in a word, continued this orator, though possessed of social talents, declines mixing with society, lest example should mislead, or connexion contaminate the hearts she is regulating by every rule of virtue and of propriety, and to fill up the measure of her goodness is at all times

times found the chearful companion, the indulgent preceptor, enforcing every excellence she commands to their approvance and adoption by the excellence of her own unequalled conduct.

Mr. Lawrence professed so earnest a desire to learn who the speaker was that had so tenderly interested his feelings, that he enquired of all around him, and amongst the rest happening to apply for that purpose to a lady he thought was mentioning him—threw his sister into great alarms—for though the disguise Mr. Jervais had chosen concealed him even from her knowledge, she was fearful her brother's question might receive some impro-

per answer, and as moreover she herself could never behold a man, without thinking of a lover, took fright at the good natured looks her brother gave (though nothing more than his natural turn of aspect,) lest he should fall in love with the really agreeable stranger, and overturn all her grand schemes for her childrens aggrandisement at once—for new kings, new laws, was, in her opinion, a certain true adage, and what queens had the power to effect, she was well convinced in her own person—she therefore besought him to let them go home as soon as possible, for that she was much fatigued.

When

When arrived at —— square Mrs. St. John made a short supper, and retired with great impatience to talk over the wonders of the evening with Dickson. That the poor young fellow adores me, cried she, is plainly proved by every word he utters—in what glowing tints does he paint my little deservings, and with what delight, and no doubt exults on every line of approbation discoverable in my countenance—which is too apt to betray the feelings of my mind—I lament, Dickson, and ever shall lament, the disparity of years between us, and yet you see the effect of drapery ; who would not have supposed him as old as myself, merely from the power of dress—but deception would not give me happiness—I should know
how

how many years distance there was between us, and possibly, from excess of delicacy, and excess of sensibility, which you know, Dickson, are my two greatest foibles, conjure up a thousand chimeras in the shape of fashionable inconstancy, though it was not in the power of either angels or devils to rival me in his affections.

Mrs. St. John went to bed, overwhelmed by this tender concern for a young fellow, who, during the whole night thought alone of her amiable niece, and Dickson was puzzled beyond measure to account for the phenomenon, that a fine, sensible, clever gentleman should overlook the blooming niece, and fouse over head and ears,

ears, as she had once heard it phrased, with a woman old enough, without a miracle, to be a grand-mother.

C H A P. IX.

NOR did the lady only go to bed, but arose under the influence of those wild ideas, and threw out a number of hints, to engage Mrs. Dickson to become his advocate, and prevail upon her to follow, out of compassion to his imputed sufferings, her own real and substantial inclination:

tion:—but however, her “cousin of Buckingham was not wont to be so dull,”—all her arts, and all her aims, could not draw her out to utter one countenancing syllable of her compassionate impulses, under which mortifying predicament she was summoned to breakfast.

Mr. Lawrence received her with new proofs of his regard and veneration, in the course of which he again professed it would give him pleasure to know the orator, to whom they were all so much indebted, for doing justice to his sister's merits.

Miss Lawrence, Lydia, and Mr. Dennis Lawrence had taken their
seats,

seats, but when Olivia and Redman were called for, the servant said they were gone, as it was so fine a morning, to breakfast at White-Conduit-House.

Mrs. St. John turned pale, and Mr. Lawrence asked Lydia and Dennis why they did not follow so good an example. So good an example, cried Mrs. St. John, with rage,—do I hear you, sir, speak so lightly of an act of flagrant rebellion?—Olivia shall find I will not be insulted with impunity—and when Lydia wishes to become an out-cast from her mother's affections, of such a mother, (bursting into tears) as I have been, then, and then only let her follow her sister's example.

I own, said Mr. Lawrence, it would have been civil to speak their intentions; but as for the criminality of the matter it does not strike me; young people will be young people, and lovers, for I have long suspected them to be such, like to say soft things to each other, without witness, and I repeat again, (though I beg it may not offend you) that I should rejoice to see Dennis and my sweet Lydia, exactly on the same good understanding.

Lydia blushed, and was much distressed, and Dennis fearful of offending his aunt, lost an opportunity of advancing his own happiness; for Mr. Lawrence had secretly determined that if the boy would have the ingenuou-
ness

ness to speak out, and the girl the courage to confess he was right in his conjectures, to give them his blessing, and promise, on the spot, never to leave or forsake them until he beheld them man and wife. Had Mrs. Dickson been present, there is little doubt she would have supplied their deficiency—however, as the case was, Mr. Lawrence went out disappointed in this second wish of his heart, and recollecting the loss of his Jessy's husband and the dear friend he had lost, took several turns round Charter-House-Square before he could recover his composure.

When, however, this tender story ceased to vibrate, he laughed to think
of

of Olivia and Redman, who had now declared themselves in terms not to be misunderstood, and thought they would make a good match of it; but whilst he was thus congratulating his benevolent heart, Mrs. St. John was railing to Mrs. Dickson against her audacious, her ungrateful daughter.

Breakfast at White-Conduit-House, cried she—walk out alone at this time in the morning with a young man—I am both shocked and scandalized by her conduct—I have set every example before her eyes. Dear madam, said Dickson, if I was you, I would not disturb myself about the matter. Nor would I, said she, if I was Mrs. Dickson —— I beseech you, my good

good friend, to consider, there is a wide difference between my daughter and yours, if in such a situation, for your daughter by such a conquest would be lifted into unhopèd for affluence—whereas mine has degraded herself, to exalt her sister, who, I see, aspires to be the head of our family; and can you think circumstances like these can sit well upon my feelings; no, Mrs. Dickson, it is a cause I will die in to prevent it. Ah, poor, poor Miss Jeffy, cried Dickson, mentally, what chance would you stand if you loved Mr. Jervais, when, where there is no rivalry, and her own children would be benefited, she can thus austere-ly decide against them.

Dinner

Dinner time arrived, and no Miss Olivia or Redman made their appearance. Mrs. St. John could not eat, and Mr. Lawrence, from beginning to think the joke was carried too far, appeared very grave; Jessy, now anxiously looked at one, and then at the other, and was deeply affected by their derangement, whilst Dennis and Lydia dared not so much as to raise their eyes for fear of becoming objects of Mrs. St. John's scrutiny or displeasure. Why sister, at length, said Mr. Lawrence, all our fine calculation respecting our children's duty and affection, seem likely to come to nothing,—as far as Olivia and Redman are concerned, I confess myself hurt, that they did not confide, to me at least, their
their

their attachment, for they should at once have received my free concurrence to pursue their hearts' desire, and the utmost exertion of my influence over you to obtain your approbation. I renounce them both, cried the lady, nor will ever pardon them.

Miss Jeffy's tears began to flow, dear aunt, said she, dear papa, let me intercede for them—they will come back, and explain their conduct—indeed they will, in such a manner, I trust, as to restore us our, for the first time, interrupted family happiness.

No tears, Jeffy, cried Mr. Lawrence, I cannot stand your tears—let them once come back—I will hear every

every apology you can offer for their conduct—nay, with my sister's consent, will most assuredly pardon them—exert your rhetoric, therefore, on your aunt's feelings; and, when you find yourself at a loss (said he, rising to withdraw) tell her, no amiable child of her's should sue to me in vain, and then let her refuse you if she can.

Mr. Lawrence went out, and Mrs. St. John begged her niece would at present say no more to her upon the hated subject—hinting at the same time that it ill became the character of innocence and goodness, to stand forth the advocate of glaring unworthiness and disobedience.

Mrs.

Mrs. Dickson being called for by Mrs. St. John, Miss Lawrence flew to her as she entered the parlour—folded her arms tenderly about her, and besought her to plead for her cousin and her brother—they will be good again, Mrs. Dickson, cried she, you may engage for them; they will—and do therefore be the happy instrument of peace and reconciliation to us all.

Mrs. Dickson kissed her cheek, sweet benevolence, said she, sweet—sweet benevolence, would I could relieve every anxiety you labour under, and see you married, whispered she to herself, to the noble minded, the learned and brave Mr. Jervais.

Mr. Lawrence bent his course towards Islington, in order to look out for the fugitives, and do all his possible to smoothe their road home—but how ineffectual his kindness, for they were already many miles on their way (as our readers no doubt have some time since conjectured, to Gretna-Green—greatly delighted, not only with their journey, but the consternation and bustle, their departure would occasion, as well as breach, in the FAMILY PARTY, and having left a note, with orders for it not to be sent to Mr. Lawrence, until the evening, at the inn from whence they had started—it was not until they were all assembled at supper, that he was enabled to communicate the intelligence.

To Gretna-Green—a daughter of mine, cried Mrs. St. John, eloped to Gretna-Green—I shall never survive the disgrace; and yet, cried Mr. Lawrence, we should not despair—considering what you have had the fortitude to survive already. Into strong hysterics went the lady—conceiving it is probable her brother wished gently to remind her, that her daughter was only a chip of the old block, according to the vulgar British proverb—her lace was cut however—the doctor sent for, and the whole house thrown into distress and confusion.

END OF VOL. II.

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